

Statement on the Death of Chaim Herzog

April 17, 1997

I was informed this morning that former Israeli President Chaim Herzog had died after a long illness. I offer my heartfelt condolences to his family and to the people of Israel. Chaim Herzog not only served the Israeli people with distinction as their President for 10 years, he was a courageous soldier in the liberation of Europe and a distinguished leader in the Israeli armed forces. He will long be remembered for his years as a statesman and scholar—he personified a vibrant, emerging Israel, taking its place in the community of nations.

Statement on the Senate Decision To Bring the Chemical Weapons Convention to a Vote

April 17, 1997

I welcome today's unanimous agreement by the Senate to bring the Chemical Weapons Convention to a vote next week. This treaty—initiated by the Reagan administration, completed and signed by the Bush administration, submitted to the Senate by my administration—has been bipartisan from the beginning. Now, thanks to the good-faith efforts of Majority Leader Lott and Minority Leader Daschle—working closely with my national security team and key members of the Senate from both sides of the aisle—the Senate will be able to vote on the treaty before it goes into effect on April 29.

Over the past 2½ months, we have all gone the extra mile to work through outstanding concerns about the treaty. As a result of negotiations Senator Lott and I established, and discussions led by Senators Biden and Helms, we now have agreement on 28 conditions that will be included in the treaty's resolution of ratification when it goes to a vote, resolving virtually all of the issues that have been raised about the CWC.

Just today, our negotiators reached agreement concerning the use of riot control agents like tear gas and to require warrants for any involuntary searches of an American business or facility under the treaty's inspec-

tion provisions. We still have five issues on which we fundamentally disagree, but we are now assured, thanks to today's agreement, that they will be decided by votes of the full Senate.

These important developments reflect widespread, bipartisan, and growing support for the Chemical Weapons Convention. Yesterday, former Presidents Bush and Ford joined Secretary of State Albright in making a special appeal for ratification. Today at a congressional hearing, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell strongly reiterated his endorsement of the treaty, which also has the support of every other Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the past two decades. And three former Secretaries of Defense—Harold Brown, Elliot Richardson, and Bill Perry—released a joint statement calling for the Senate to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention.

All of these distinguished American leaders agree that by requiring countries around the world to destroy their chemical weapons stockpiles—as the United States already has decided to do—and to renounce developing or trading in chemical weapons in the future, the Chemical Weapons Convention will help make our troops safer while making it harder for rogue states and terrorists to acquire chemical weapons.

This treaty literally was “made in America,” and it also is right for America. I urge every Member of the Senate to support the Chemical Weapons Convention when it comes to a vote next week.

Proclamation 6990—Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 1997

April 17, 1997

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

A commitment to learning has been at the heart of America's progress for more than 200 years. Now, as we stand on the threshold of the 21st century, our continued success as a Nation depends on the quality of education that we provide to all our citizens.

American children must have all the tools they need to make the most of their God-

given potential. We must help them harness the powerful forces of technology, so that every student, including those in the most isolated rural towns and those in the poorest inner-city schools, has access to the vast universe of knowledge available on the Internet.

However, education involves more than books, facts, and homework assignments. Education also concerns the building of character. Character is an anchor of our society, and we should work hard to cultivate it among our young people. If our Nation is to continue to thrive and prosper, we must continue to live up to our ideals.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, grasped these fundamental truths. Espousing the values of education, morality, and civic duty throughout his distinguished life, he understood that learning and the sharing of experiences are crucial to developing the skills that will mold the character of each new generation. By striving to provide the best education possible, we can better prepare our Nation for the challenges that confront us as we move forward into the next century. The Rebbe rightly saw education as a continuous process of effort and experience, in which each person is nurtured from the cradle throughout life, bringing out the best in all of us.

I urge all Americans, on this day and throughout the year, to remember the teachings of the Rebbe, and to work in partnership with educators, administrators, community leaders, and parents to help our young people thrive and prosper.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 18, 1997, as Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate activities and programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:49 a.m., April 18, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 21.

Teleconference Remarks on the Opening of the Newseum

April 18, 1997

The President. Thank you, Al and Charles and Peter. Thanks a lot for asking me an easy question that can only get me in trouble. Whatever I say, I'll be behind the curve ball, which is, of course, where all of you try to keep me. [Laughter] Nonetheless, I'm glad to be with you today. And I am glad the Vice President was able to officially open the Newseum, and I'm glad he told you the stories that I hear about once a week about his days as a reporter. [Laughter] He says he was always accurate, vigorous, and totally fair. [Laughter]

Thanks to the technological wizardry that you've built into this wonderful Newseum, I'm able to join you on your video news wall for the grand opening. It's amazing to me that this is happening. You know, when I was growing up, I got my news from my local paper or watching the 6 o'clock news on my family's black and white TV, and I suppose I never imagined the incredible array of ways people would someday get their news and their information, from all-news radio and TV to the Internet and all the sort of "near-news" programs.

And I think that's why this Newseum is so important, because it will remind us that we've come a long way, but no matter how it's packaged or delivered, news has always fulfilled mankind's most basic need to know. And it also reminds us that democracy's survival depends upon that need to know and the free flow of ideas and information.

I congratulate you on giving our children and their parents an opportunity to learn about the role news media has in protecting our freedoms and helping us to build the most robust and open society in human history.

This Newseum is not only a tribute to the news profession, it's also a tribute to the men and women who have dedicated their lives